

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Applicants submit herewith a formalized version of Figure 25A, which was erroneously omitted from the formal drawings submitted to the Patent Office on August 5, 2004. The original version of Figure 25A was included in the original application filed on March 31, 2004. The enclosed drawing merely formalizes the original informal drawing.

REMARKS

The foregoing amendment amends claims 1, 11, 14 and 16 and cancels claims 6, 7, 12, 13 and 15. Pending in the application are claims 1-5, 8, 10-11, 14, and 16-60, of which claims 1, 11, 17, 19, 32, 35, 40, 45, 53 and 59 are independent. Claims 4, 5, 8, 19-44, 51 and 53-58 are withdrawn pursuant to a Restriction Requirement. The following comments address all stated grounds for rejection and place the presently pending claims, as identified above, in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 1 is amended to include the patentable subject matter of claim 7 and intervening claim 6.

Independent claim 11 is amended to include the patentable subject matter of allowable independent claim 15 and intervening claims 12 and 13. Consequential amendments are made to claims 14 and 16 for purposes of clarity only. *No new matter is added.*

Amendment and/or cancellation of the claims is not to be construed as an acquiescence to any of the objections/rejections set forth in the instant Office Action, and were done solely to expedite prosecution of the application. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the claims as originally filed, or similar claims, in this or one or more subsequent patent applications.

Drawing Amendment

Applicants submit herewith a formal version of Figure 25A. An informal copy of Figure 25A was submitted with the original application on March 31, 2004, but the formal version of Figure 25A was erroneously omitted from the formal drawings submitted on August 5, 2004. Applicants respectfully request that this formal version of Figure 25A be included with the other formal drawings for this application.

Claim objections

Regarding the objection to claims 6 and 15, Applicants have amended claim 6, as suggested by the Examiner, to address the informality, and claim 15 is canceled, rendering the objection moot.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejections

Applicants thank the Examiner for the close review of the claims and for indicating that claims 17, 18, 45-50, 52 and 59 are allowed and that claims 7, 10, 15 and 16 recite patentable subject matter. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1, 6, 11, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Campbell (U.S. Patent Publication 2003/0215941). Claims 11, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a/e) as being anticipated by the Anderson et al. reference (U.S. Patent Publication 2002/0015952). Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's position and submit that the claims distinguish patentably over the cited Campbell reference and the cited Anderson reference.

However, to expedite allowance and issuance of a patent on the present application, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include the patentable subject matter of claim 7 and independent claim 11 to include the patentable subject matter of claim 15.

As recognized by the Examiner, the cited references do not disclose a capping module for a microfluidic system including a plurality of connector ports for connecting a chamber to a plurality of microchannels. Therefore, claims 1-3, 11, 14 and 60 are in condition for immediate allowance.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejections

Regarding the rejection of claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Campbell reference in view of the Wilding '392 reference, independent claim 1 distinguishes patentably over the prior art. Therefore, claims 2 and 3, which depend from claim 1, are also now immediately allowable.

For at least these reasons, all pending claims of the present application are novel and include an inventive step over the cited prior art.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment, applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

If a telephone conversation with Applicants' attorney would help expedite the prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is urged to call the undersigned attorney at (617) 227-7400.

Applicants believe no fee is due with this statement. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. TGZ-030 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: December 29, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

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